



**Urban Academy Charter School
School Board Meeting
January 28, 2013
Urban Academy – St. Paul, MN
5:30 PM**

MINUTES

Board Members:	Ex-Officio Members:	Advisory Members:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Melissa Jensen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mongsher Ly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Luis Brown-Pena
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tamara Mattison		<input type="checkbox"/> Pamela Young
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Barbara Shin		<input type="checkbox"/> Fong Lor
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kristin Evans		<input type="checkbox"/> Mai Saevang
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michael Ahrnt		<input type="checkbox"/> Ralph Elliott
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Roger Sykes		<input type="checkbox"/> Crystal Scott

☐ **Staff and Guests Attending:**

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Meeting called to order by Chair at 5:30 PM
Board Minutes taken by Kristin Evans

Acceptance of Agenda

Board Motion: Approve the agenda.

Board Member motioning to approving agenda: Mattison

Board Member seconding the motion: Ardht

Question: Addressing security from last meeting? Table it to next meeting?

Unanimously approved.

Approval of November 19, 2012 Minutes

Board Motion: Approve the November 19, 2012 minutes

Original: Loan application

Correction: part of the report

Original: teacher commitment to Urban Academy

Correction: policy of teacher investment program

-Staff members leave and money has been put in to develop their skills

-will be addressed later in the meeting

Board Motion: to accept the minutes

Board member motioning to accept the minutes: Mattison

Board Member seconding the motion: Evans

Unanimously approved.

Conflict of Interest

Nothing new to report

Reports/Announcements

Board Motion to accept the reports

Board Member: Shin

Board Member seconding the motion: Ahrdt

Abstained: none

Board Chair Updates – M. Hansen

-Dr. Shin and Melissa are up for re-elections at the end of June

-Elections will begin in February. Board members should take names to recruit, and nominate (give names to Dr. Ly). Elections will take place in March. Group ballots need to be created before elections take place.

-New board members will be brought onto the board after elections. They will have non-voting status until the end of July.

Questions:

-Is there a screening process or a way to get information on candidates?

-Nomination process? (Shin)

-Bios and discussion?

-Dr. Ly will email the board info about what is needed when recruiting new board members (criteria). This will start with secretary and chair. We need to have 5-7 board members, but can have up to 15

-need to have an odd number for voting purposes

Board Motion: to accept Board Chair updates

Board Member motioning to accept Board Chair updates : Sykes

Board Member seconding the motion: Evans

Unanimously approved.

Finance Chair Report – T. Mattison

- Urban Academy had a total cash balance of \$1,139,118

We are now being advertised in the Hmong yellow pages

Executive Director Report – Dr. Ly

ADMINISTRATION DUTIES:

1. Updated improvement plan to MDE
2. Preschool: Administration did research with MDE and grants, and visited schools.
 - a. Current concerns with starting a preschool program here: no funding from the state, self-sufficient through parents or school (through general ed funds), other schools charge parents (i.e. issue with checks bouncing), and costing schools \$150,000 per year. Preschool programs are a different program than K-12. It is not recognized by MDE (funding wise). Preschool students can't interact with K-12 students. They will need their own facilities, busing, and space. Families are using the school for Pre-K and K and then moving the students to another school. However, some schools are only accepting students if they have older siblings in 1-12 (not legal). Schools are also having to backtrack due to not having enough funds for K-12.
 - b. The board needs to consider all of the options and look more closely at our population.
 - i. Options: Find a facility that has had a preschool program already established. Administration has been discussing this: more cons than pros at this time. What are the teacher reasons: learning, more prepared?
 - ii. A study was completed through Wilder: students are more prepared. However, not all early education programs are equal. The results are different. A return investment study has not been done.
 - iii. If students attended preschool here: more familiar with our expectations, structure, and learning programs. The school already has early childhood funding (currently goes to our 4 and 5 year old kindergarten students). There are specific regulations to follow. It is like starting another school without any funding.
 - iv. Is it better to add 7-8 program than add a preschool (state department)?
 - v. What is the most beneficial?
3. Ralph Elliott's son was killed on January 13th. The funeral was held this past weekend. The board should send some type of response to the family. (Ardnt & Shin). Melissa will be in charge of this. Board members can send their regrets individually as well.
4. Summer School

- a. Our summer school program hasn't happened in the last 2 years. It does not support the reward/return investment. Funding is an issue (\$60-70,000). The program runs for four weeks (4 hours per day). Parents have requested it. For some parents, it is like a summer camp; others, their children need it.
- b. Discussion:
 - i. Some students aren't there mentally or invest themselves in learning. How can we better structure summer school to get better results? How we pitch summer school to students and families? Some students see it as punishment. Students need to be in summer school. It would be a safer place for them. What is the potential? Some programs are intensive—depend on how it's pitched to them. Can it be pitched as a theme (i.e. science, laboratory)? Need to keep them going academically to not regress over the summer. If summer school goes back in, what gives? The budget would need to be restructured. What is the percentage of students attending summer school? We need to track who attends and who doesn't. A mix of high achievers and low achievers? Students are invited based on test scores. How do we structure and prepare it? Is there a cost difference between half and all day?
 - ii. Tamara Mattison would like to be the liaison to communicate this to parents at monthly meetings. Can these concerns of low achievers be addressed with parents? As an enrichment program? Parents of color see summer school as a reprimand. We need to transform their minds. For example, middle school and high school students--they can get credits earlier and graduate earlier.
 - iii. The board needs to discuss it. Dr. Shin wants to see a summer school program put together (include culture of African-American students) before talking about a budget. The program must be exciting to students and families to buy-in to it.
 - iv. Ideas → cognitive skills, reading, and writing (sentence structure) are missing. Include: math: basic for any job, locating information (i.e. computers, library), do things outside, applied techniques (i.e. measure things in a group to develop social skills asking questions). Luis Pena can help with ideas on creating summer school programs. Dr. Shin would like to see more creativity.
 - v. Ly: address the teaching staff with this idea and the board will support it financially
- c. Teaching has changed. Students now have to memorize in order to pass the state tests. They don't know how to think for themselves.
 - i. Dr. Shin coaches teachers in middle and high schools in Minneapolis. She has seen students come to school with homework prepared. At another school: students not on-task for 5 minutes, or answering critical thinking questions. Results vary depending where you go based on the type of education and

learning. Results depend of the environment the teachers create and instruction. There are less experienced teachers in needy schools

- ii. What can we do as a board to shift the direction of learning and achievement? (talk about at next meeting).

OPERATIONS:

1. Southeast (contracted company) here to monitor schools (Barb Marchetti). They wanted to come in to be with the school 40-50 hours per month to sit in at leadership meetings, PLCs, etc. Their original intent was watch meetings and check in with us. This changed to wanting to dictate what the school is doing. Dr. Ly rejected this.

Dr. Shin suggested that the board as a whole should give a response to MDE as offended and that we shouldn't sit still on this matter, especially when it comes from MDE. Dr. Ly will email the report from Southeast to the board.

2. Closed school on December 10th due to snow

BUDGET/FINANCE DISCUSSIONS:

1. Savings account moved into money market account
 2. Park bank no longer doing savings?
 3. Money has to be moved out of checking account to savings if above 250,000
 4. Line of Credit: UA will not need any additional funds (MDE freed up additional funds)
- Dr. Ly suggests that we keep 300,000 line of credit open just in case.

Motion: To accept the line of credit

Board member motioning to accept the line of credit: Shin

Board member seconding the motion: Melissa

Unanimously approved

COMMUNITY OUTREACH/DONATIONS

1. First swimming class went well. Additional funding has been approved for more students (grades 3-6: 110 students completed classes by the end of February). This completes gym time requirements (# of minutes)
2. Holiday meal went well. 350 meals were served. There was a conflict with Naomi shelter (dates)—they had an event the same day as ours.
3. Toy drive was successful. Students got 2 large and a bag of 4-5 small toys
4. Large pile of winter wear from clothing drive is all gone!
5. Experience works volunteers began on January 7th. May get 2 more volunteers still and currently have 5. They are here 4 hours everyday.

6. Givens foundation volunteers started today (art and culture of African-Americans)
What about the other cultures in the school?
7. Federal A Bureau will come in to do a piece on MLK
8. Securian Workers will come in to do reading buddies for grades K-3 and mentorship for grades 4-6
9. Junior Achievement: grades 4-6 will be going on February 28 (9 am – 1 pm) to Biz Town (on White Bear Avenue). It is a simulated town/business center. Volunteers will be coming into the school to help students prepare. Board members are invited to be chaperones/volunteers.
10. Budget revision: Net fund balance: 169,000 (based on 260 ADM)--Will not change very much the rest of the school year. Look under state revenue/state aid for changes made (new email sent out today). This makes our budget look stronger due to freed up funds from MDE.

Committee Reports/Comments

Facility Committee ~ M. Ahrnt (Chair):

1. The committee has toured 4 facilities now. We just got last two proposals (St. James and Greg's) and need the other two. The committee will be meeting on February 14th to review proposals. Jacquelyn and Paul will be here at the next board meeting to go over the information. The school needs to let the landlord know by the end of June about our decision. He would like to know sooner than that.
2. Questions/Discussion:
 - Do we know how much space we want? The committee has been discussing it. The board will discuss it as well.
 - Send info to the board ahead of time to review if necessary.
 - Add arts and music programs, science lab, green space, parking areas→existing school facilities
 - The parishes have committed to renovate
 - St. Greg's has the most green space (adjacent to Highland Park High School), but does not have an existing gym. Domes can be rented to provide this need.

Old Business

1. Teacher Commitment: Melissa brought examples of sample contracts. Dr. Ly will put into the form of our by-laws/policy (?) and send to the board. Will it create resistance towards becoming more professionally development?

New Business

1. Dr. Shin was at the inauguration of President Obama

2. Next month: commitment, facilities, security, and elections
3. Dr. Ly will bring snacks to the next meeting. Create a signup sheet for board members to bring snacks to board meetings.

Open Public Comments (Limited to 2 minutes)

none

Board Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 7:11

Board Member motioning to approve to adjourn: Shin

Board Member seconding the motion: Ahrnt

Next meeting will be held on February 25th, 2013 at 5:30pm. ~